

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 22, 2016

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

We write to express our strong support for reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program for fiscal year 2016 and beyond, and our willingness to support your efforts. The SRS program provides crucial support for law enforcement, transportation infrastructure, and education in the more than 720 counties in 41 states that depend on revenue from federal forests.

The SRS program expired on September 30, 2015. Earlier this year the last payments were distributed to eligible counties. Most counties have completed their budgets for the upcoming year and without the SRS program, counties have been forced to cut vital services. As a result, funding for law enforcement, road maintenance, and education has in many cases been reduced. Nine million students have gone back to school with fewer teachers and educational opportunities. Taken together, these funding cuts negatively affect everyone who lives or visits these counties.

According to the National Association of Counties, when the authorization for SRS lapsed in fiscal year 2014, forest payments to counties decreased by over 80 percent. Counties and school districts nationwide faced dramatic budgetary shortfalls. Thankfully, Congress understood the serious effect the cuts created and reauthorized the SRS program retroactively.

The SRS program continues to be a critical safety net for forest counties. As Congress continues its work to improve forest management with policies that protect natural resources, improve forest health and provide jobs, we urge you to work in a bipartisan fashion to reauthorize the SRS program.

We stand ready to work with you in support of this important program.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Scott Tipton
Member of Congress

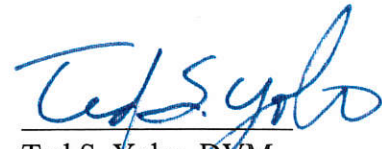


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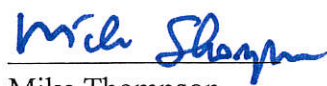

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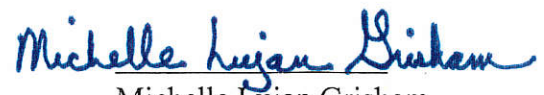

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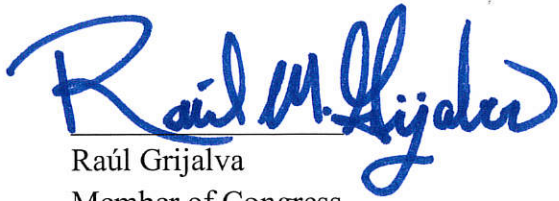

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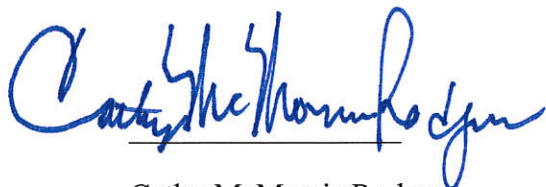

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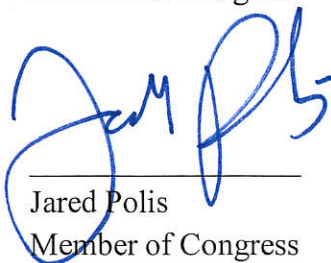
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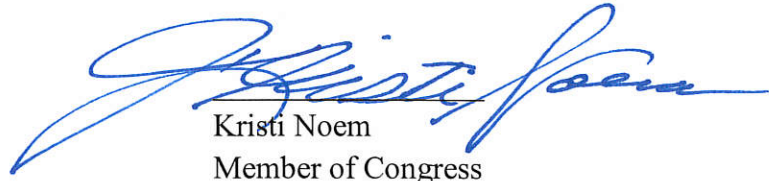
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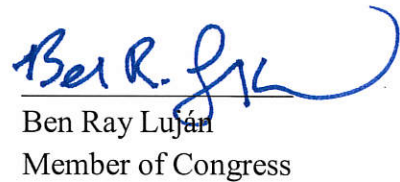
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